

**From:** [Bourhan Yassin](#)  
**To:** [David Klein](#); [Rob Conant](#)  
**Cc:** [Mahreen Qazi](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Resignation  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 19, 2024 6:23:58 AM

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Rob and David,

Please see below the resignation I received yesterday afternoon from Marconi and the entire science team.

With Chrissy's departure last week and now the entire science team leaving us at the end of the month, I don't think I have any words left to describe how devastating this is.

Mahreen,

Could you please compile a list of all the projects and grant deliverables that will be impacted by this.

Bourhan

Bourhan Yassin  
Chief Executive Officer  
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----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** **Marconi Campos Cerqueira** <[marconi@rfcx.org](mailto:marconi@rfcx.org)>  
**Date:** Mon, Mar 18, 2024 at 3:53 PM  
**Subject:** Resignation  
**To:** Bourhan Yassin <[bourhan@rfcx.org](mailto:bourhan@rfcx.org)>

Dear Bourhan,

With a heavy heart, I compose this message to you, recognizing the depth of our professional and personal relationship. However, circumstances have compelled me to take this step.

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to you for your inspirational leadership and guidance over the past four years. Thanks to your unwavering support along with our leadership team's exceptional dedication, I successfully cultivated a formidable science team within our organization, firmly placing science at the forefront of our decision-making processes. This is something that I am incredibly proud of, and it has all been made possible by your and our leadership team's support and guidance.

Through collective efforts, our science team has played a pivotal role in promoting and



advancing diverse conservation initiatives in over 80 projects with goals ranging from spearheading the creation of protected areas to enhancing the management of endangered species and facilitating forest restoration efforts. During my time at RFCx, the Science Team successfully published over ten peer-reviewed papers in prestigious scientific journals, underscoring the undeniable impact of our organization's efforts and initiatives. These publications not only demonstrated the efficacy of Ecoacoustics but also provided compelling scientific evidence of its instrumental role in enhancing biodiversity protection and facilitating conservation efforts. Our work has propelled Arbimon to the forefront of ecoacoustic studies; Arbimon is now the largest repository of soundscape recordings, spanning 120 countries with over 4,000 species detected. We've developed more than 14 regional AI models for species identification in the last three years, solidifying Arbimon's position as a critical reference in bioacoustic analysis. Through our hard work we have established Arbimon as a renowned engine for harnessing the power of AI and sound to improve biodiversity monitoring and conservation.

Despite all these accomplishments and our dedication to science and conservation, it is with deep regret that I, along with my committed team comprised of Kris Harmon, Gabriel Leite, Tomaz Melo, Guilherme de Melo, Jose Wagner, Thiago Bicudo, Nelson Buainain, and Claydson Assis must tender our resignations from Rainforest Connection effective March 31. This decision weighs heavily upon us, but it is fueled by a profound commitment to advance biodiversity conservation and our need to uphold the integrity of our scientific pursuits.

The ongoing association of our hard work and accomplishments with RFCx board members attempting to leverage organizational successes for personal gain has repeatedly compromised our scientific standing and casts a shadow over our collective efforts. **This situation has trampled the morale of our team and eroded our confidence in the organization's direction. Additionally, the gross minimization by the RFCx board of the data corruption incident, and subsequent inaction on an issue which still disrupts our project workflow and severely impacted our mental and emotional well-being, has jeopardized our reputation with partners and the Arbimon community.** This situation has created a deep sense of uncertainty, vulnerability, and abandonment in our team.

Arbimon and its vibrant community represent the culmination of my professional life's work, with the platform originating as a project at the University of Puerto Rico under Mitch Aide's vision and leadership while I was a graduate student in his lab. Since its establishment, Arbimon has been enriched by the dedicated contributions of numerous students, colleagues, and researchers. I have directly spent 12 years contributing to the evolution it has experienced. Arbimon now serves a diverse community of over 4,000 users, including researchers, students, and conservationists; it contains the largest repository of raw soundscape recordings in the world, and has contributed to hundreds of projects and scientific studies. My departure from Arbimon's path, especially now at the moment of launch of the newest iteration, causes me unimaginable pain and anguish, **but operating in an environment where my work and reputation, along with those of my team, are constantly at stake and where our efforts are marginalized and undervalued has become untenable.**

Furthermore, despite the Science Team's unwavering dedication, significant achievements, countless sacrifices, and steadfast commitment to our work, mission, and vision, I still feel we are underrepresented and unsupported by the current board, and it is disheartening to observe that some members of the board seem not to recognize the value we bring to the organization. To the contrary, there has been an unjust portrayal of dishonesty and a questioning of personal

integrity directed towards me. In addition to feeling undervalued and overlooked, my scarce communications with the board have left in me a sense of intimidation and even discrimination. These actions are perplexing, given my extreme dedication to advancing our conservation mission and vision as the Chief Scientist of Rainforest Connection, where every endeavor has been aimed at advancing acoustic monitoring to improve biodiversity conservation. Such treatment starkly contradicts the values we claim to uphold.

Our departure marks the end of a significant chapter characterized by shared projects and cherished relationships. We will genuinely miss the mutual support and remarkable sense of unity that we've cultivated within the day-to-day operations of RFCx while collaborating on something truly extraordinary.

Despite bidding farewell, our commitment to our external partners and to facilitating a seamless transition remains unwavering. Should the organization require it, we stand ready to lend our assistance in concluding any remaining work or ongoing projects. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me should there be specific tasks for which our expertise or support could be of value during this transition period.

With heavy hearts,

Marconi Campos Cerqueira, Chief Scientist  
Kristopher Harmon, Science Projects Strategist  
Gabriel Leite, Biodiversity Science Lead  
Tomaz Melo, Biodiversity Scientist  
Guilherme de Melo, Biodiversity Scientist  
José Wagner Ribeiro Jr, Quantitative Ecology Lead  
Thiago Bicudo, Quantitative Ecologist  
Nelson Buainain, Data Science Lead  
Claydson Assis, Data Scientist